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ABSTRACT

The manual considers practical issues involved in building and maintaining the effectiveness of school based support teams, interdisciplinary problem solving groups designed to respond to staff needs through crisis intervention, short or long term consultation, and continuous support. Separate sections address the following topics (sample subtopics in parentheses): rationale; establishment (models, levels of implementation, team planning and preparation); evolution (five stages of team development); requirements for successful operation (mutuality and interdependence, documentation, administrative support); and assurance of the team's continuation (maintenance, leader tasks, and guidelines). More than half of the document is composed of five appendixes including five models of various teams, papers on critical variables in staff support teams, initiation in local school buildings of instructional support teams, parents on school based staff support teams, and inservice training. (CL)

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SCHOOL BASED STAFF SUPPORT TEAMS: A BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION

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BEND IT, FOLD IT, DUPLICATE IT
Introduction

Every school in this country could benefit from having a school-based staff support team, not a federally mandated I.E.P. planning team, but a team whose purpose it is to support staff by providing a vehicle for problem solving. If a school does not already have a staff support team, there are probably some components which, with additional structure and direction, could be combined to form the basis of a team. If a staff support team is already in operation, careful attention needs to be given to nurture and sustain it.

If you are in a position in a school system, university or state department that can effect or be effected by the establishment or maintenance of a staff support team, this this monograph was written for you. As the title suggests, this is intended to be a users manual to assist you wherever you may be in the team building process. Hopefully, you will find it useful in your endeavors in the sometimes arduous, sometimes frustrating, but ultimately rewarding process of building a staff support team.

HOW CAN THIS MONOGRAPH BE USEFUL TO YOU?
Table of Contents

Where are you in the team-building process? Have you ever considered establishing a school-based, staff support team? Or, are you someone who has been working with support teams for a while, but wonder how to insure their continuance beyond the initial year or two of successful functioning? The question(s) about teams that you are currently raising will probably determine the most useful place for you to begin reading.

IF THIS IS YOUR QUESTION	INFORMATION IS HERE
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WHY BUILD A SCHOOL–BASED STAFF SUPPORT TEAM?
Expectation/Results

What can you expect to happen if a school-based, staff support team is established and "lovingly" maintained? Will individual needs of students be better met? Will there be a greater improvement in the instructional program? Will the staff be given better support, and will the building atmosphere be enhanced?

The answer to all these questions is yes.

Consider a building where the following can happen . . . .

Staff skills and effectiveness of services are increased

- A building problem solving model is developed
- Information is easily disseminated
- Personnel and services are better utilized
- Services are integrated, not departmentalized
- Staff collaboration is developed and embraced
- Staff communication and cohesion expands
- Inservice training is tailored to individual needs
- Teaching skills are easily upgraded
- Staff development is planned and frequently delivered by the recipients, and
- Needs assessment is ongoing and dynamic

And where . . . .

Individual needs of students are met

- Teachers have a clearer understanding of student potential
- "Mainstreaming" has a single practical definition
- Inappropriate, unnecessary referrals are eliminated
- Needed referrals are facilitated
- Students are appropriately placed and better adjusted
- Classroom programs are modified to meet individuals needs
- Positive parent involvement is facilitated
- Community support is increased, and
- Potential law suits are replaced by parent cooperation

And even where . . . .

Professional atmosphere is enhanced

- Crises normally faced by the principal are reduced
- A greater appreciation of the roles of others develops
- Peer support and encouragement are commonplace
- Morale is high because "someone cares"
- Coping mechanisms replace anxieties
- Job satisfaction improves
- "Burn out" is reduced, and
- The strengths of professionals, particularly class teachers, are recognized, emphasized, and built upon.

This is where you will find a school-based, staff support team in action.

WHAT IS A STAFF SUPPORT TEAM?
Description

A staff support team is a school-based problem-solving group whose purpose is to provide a vehicle for discussion of issues related to specific needs of teachers or students and to offer consultation and follow-up assistance to staff. The team can respond to staff needs in a variety of ways. It can provide immediate crisis intervention, short-term consultation, continuous support, or the securing of information, resources, or training for those who request its service. By providing problem-specific support and assistance to individuals and groups, the team can help teachers and other professionals to become more skillful, gain confidence, and feel more efficacious in their work with students.

The exact role and procedures of a team will vary over time and from school to school. These will depend on the needs of staff, the team membership and current concerns or issues. Over the course of time its role may include assessing and determining building-level needs for staff development and providing the means by which those needs are met or facilitating and expediting student assessment and placement. The question of team role and procedures is addressed during formative stages, but needs to remain open to reinterpretation to allow the team to evolve to meet changing staff needs.

As a *staff support* team, the group is not to be confused with federally mandated evaluation, placement, and I.E.P. planning teams. The focus of the latter teams is on students; that of the former on assistance to school staff members. The overall purpose of the staff support team is to facilitate the development of a responsive, productive, and satisfying professional climate in a school.

While team composition may vary,[1] three features are critical:[2]

1. *Multidisciplinary membership* with representation from regular and special education, administration, instructional support services.[3] Support services not actually represented on the team should be available on a consulting basis, as needed. Such diverse representation is needed to maximize the team's resources and therefore its ability to address needs.

2. *Balanced representation* of regular educators, specialists, and support services. This increases classroom teacher identification with team functioning, and helps to decrease hesitancy to request service from a team whose membership includes persons with specialized training. The regular education member(s) also offer a perspective on the feasibility of implementing a team-generated idea in a full-size classroom. As a result, the team consultation is more likely to be useful to teachers.

1. See Models of Teams, Appendix A.

2. For further elaboration see S. Stokes and P. Axelrod, *Staff Support Teams: Critical Variables*, Appendix B.

3. Not all staff support teams have multidisciplinary membership. See Chalfant's Assistance Team Model, Appendix A. In some schools the barrier between classroom teachers and specialists would make the likelihood of collaboration on a support team improbable. In other schools, administrators choose not to join teams. A staff support team without an administrator or special education personnel can certainly provide a kind of support to teachers. However, multidisciplinary membership is a preferred goal towards which teams should work.

3. *Indigenous team membership.* The membership of a staff support team needs to be indigenous to the school in which it operates, i.e. the team should be building-based. Individuals who work in a school are familiar with the constraints of the working situation as well as the resources available. Therefore, their support and recommendations would likely be more feasible and appropriate than those of a team from outside the building. Also, staff will be more likely to risk requesting consultation and support from a team of familiar colleagues than from unknown individuals from "the outside".

Summary

The purpose of the indigenous, multidisciplinary staff support team is to provide support to educators to enable them to respond effectively to the ever changing demands of their profession. The principle means of support provided by the team is consultation and follow-up assistance at a staff member's request with respect to a specific problem or concern about a student. The team's work may also include long-term staff developmental activities. There is no ideal support team model. Team composition, role, and procedures should vary to match circumstances. However, attention should be given to factors which encourage staff to utilize the team and its resources, such as balanced representation. Finally, it should be emphasized that the team is an indigenous, on-line support system which enables educators to grow in problem-solving capacity and sense of efficacy.

Description —

1. *There is no ideal support team model.*
2. *There may, however, be an ideal match between a particular team model and the needs of a given school staff.*
3. *All support teams should have members indigenous to the school in which it operates, representation from regular education and, whenever possible, multidisciplinary membership.*
4. *Many if not most schools have elements which can be modified, added to or given an overall structure, direction and needed assistance to become a staff support team.*

HOW IS A SCHOOL–BASED STAFF SUPPORT TEAM ESTABLISHED?

Implementation

How do you establish school-based teams on a voluntary basis? What steps appear to be useful? What factors need to be addressed at each step of the implementation process?

The implementation of a staff support team will raise questions, anxieties, concerns which must be addressed if the team concept is to be accepted. Certain factors appear to be critical to this acceptance. They include: clearly evidenced administrative commitment and support; collaborative planning for implementation; continuous on-line support to individuals establishing the team; clarity of both goals and roles; and a receptive school staff. To attend to each of these factors a series of steps must be taken during the implementation process. This section of the monograph outlines these steps and the activities which need to be completed in order to successfully establish staff support teams in one or more schools.[4]

STEP 1: ENTRY

The appropriate team model is chosen; the system into which it is to be introduced is analyzed to determine appropriate introductory strategies; and the team concept and specific model are introduced to key decision-makers for initial approval.

I. Gather data to answer the following:

Models available

A. What models of school-based teams are available that have already been successfully implemented?

Characteristics of personnel and system

B. What are the characteristics of the system and personnel who might establish teams? What are the relevant formal and informal power structures? What helping role can the teacher association/union play? What are the contractual arrangements with organizations? With school districts?

Match

C. Which team model appears to be most appropriate to the needs of potential adopters?

D. What components of a staff support team are already in place in potential sites? How should these be taken into consideration? For example, can they be incorporated? Built upon?

Levels at which team concept likely to be implemented

E. At what level is the staff support team concept most likely to be initially adopted?[5] Building? System? Cooperative? State?

F. Who are the key decision-makers and, therefore, at what level should the appropriate model be introduced? Individual school building? School system? School district? Cooperative? State education agency?

4. For further elaboration on the implementation of one team concept see M. Horvath and L. Baker, *Instructional Support Teams: Their Initiation in Local School Buildings*, Appendix C.

5. Even if the model of the staff support team is adopted by an entire district, cooperative, or state, the concept should be implemented on a small scale so that each team can be fashioned to meet the needs of a specific site. Successful implementation at these sites may then lead to system- or district-wide, cooperative or state-wide implementation.

Introduction of support team concept to key administrative decision-makers

2. Plan and conduct activities for key decision-makers to introduce them to the concept of staff support teams based on answers to the questions posed above and including the following:
   A. Description of the model selected.
   B. Analysis of benefits of having a staff support team in a school including any previous success data.
   C. Analysis of staff support team components already in existence.
   D. Analysis of what time, energy resources, etc., the establishment of a team will "cost".
   E. Description of possible procedures for implementation of a team.

Initial administrative approval

3. If introduction of the team concept is from outside the system, secure permission. If introduction is from within the system, secure decision-maker(s) support to introduce team concept to staff from school(s) where teams might be implemented.

Introduce concept to school personnel who might implement team in their building

4. Plan and conduct activities to introduce the concept to school personnel who might adopt the staff support team approach.
   A. Description of model.
   B. Analysis of benefits of having a staff support team in a school including any previous success data.
   C. Analysis of staff support team components already in existence.
   D. Analysis of what time, energy resources, etc., the establishment of a team will "cost".
   E. Description of possible procedures for implementation of a team.

STEP 2: ADOPTION

Approval and support for the establishment of one or more teams is secured from all appropriate persons and organizations in the system. Commitment to establish a team at a site is finalized from the school staff.

1. Secure indication of interest by key decision-makers at school system or building level.

Initial approval

2. Secure initial approval from key decision-makers to secure support for team implementation at one or more sites.
3. Secure support for establishment of team(s) from the following:
   A. Building administrator to encourage acceptance and later facilitate the development of the team and its use by the staff. *Active* endorsement by principal is critical to successful implementation of teams.
   B. As many members of building staff as possible, particularly the opinion leaders, in order to encourage initial acceptance.

Support at every level

   C. Director of programs for students with special needs[6] to support the process and the efforts of a team to meet the needs of teachers and children, to encourage continuation of individual teams,

6. This is particularly appropriate if there is more than one team in a school system.

to provide resources needed by a team and to provide linkage with other teams in the system.

D. Teacher association and unions—to encourage and facilitate staff participation in the teaming process.

Site selection Final approval

4. Finalize approval and commitment from all appropriate levels of administration for team establishment at specific site(s).

STEP 3: FORMATION OF TEAM

The selection process for team members is determined and carried out.

Determination of selection process

1. Building administrator and staff[7] determine specific selection process[8] including:
   A. Nature of representation[9] which, whenever possible, should include:
      1. Regular and special education teachers
      2. Building administrator or designee
      3. Someone from the field of guidance, psychology, social work
      4. Teachers who work with different age levels.
   B. Degree to which membership is restricted.
   C. Degree to which peer selection will be a part of the process.
   D. Duration of membership: One year? Two years?

Indepth introduction of team concept to staff

2. Introduce concept to entire building with activities that review or address:
   1. General purpose and goals of team
   2. Membership representation
   3. Selection process
   4. System policy and contractual arrangements which need to be considered.

Selection

3. Select team members.

STEP 4: TEAM PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Team members determine goals and operating procedures; assess their skills and secure needed training and technical assistance to form collaborative team; and promote school-wide use of team services.

7. While each decision *has* to have the support of the administrator, all staff who will be affected by the implementation of the team should be involved as much as possible in the planning process. The more they are involved in the planning, the more they will feel a part of, "own" and support the staff support team concept and implementation.

8. An outside process observer consultant can provide invaluable help in the early stages of team development from the moment the determination of the selection process begins.

9. Traditionally, parents have not been used in staff support teams. However, for a model that includes them see *Building Instructional Support Teams* in Appendix A. For further notes on the inclusion of parents, see Appendix D.

1. Team members plan for implementation of team process.

Goals

A. Refine group goals.

B. Determine operating procedures including:

Procedures

1. Format
2. Leadership functions and responsibilities
3. Frequency and duration of meetings
4. Time and place of meeting
5. Classroom coverage considerations, if needed
6. Data collection and evaluation processes.

Needs assessment

C. Carry out needs assessment to determine immediate needs of team for technical assistance, resources, training.[10]

Incentives

D. Determine how incentives can be maximized and/or barriers removed for:

1. Staff participating as team members
2. Staff utilizing the team's services

Assistance

E. Secure assistance, resources, training needed as indicated by C and D–1 above.

Communication with staff

F. Communicate with staff about operating procedures including information relating to B and D–2 above.

Promote acceptance

2. Team members promote school-wide acceptance and use of team services.[11]

STEP 5: INFORMATION AND RESOURCE LINK–UP

Once goals and operating procedures have been determined, the team needs to develop a means of having access to and availing itself of the information and services from a multiplicity of people and organizations at the local, state and national level.

School resources

1. The team is linked to other ad hoc or permanent school committees or programs, such as the curriculum committee, the P.L. 94–142 Child Study team, PTA–PTO, etc.

Local resources

2. The team is linked to the local education agency resources, for example, teacher consultants, where the position is utilized and other teams, if they exist in the district, cooperative, or school corporation.

Regional resources

3. The team is linked through contact people to regional resources, colleges and universities, agencies, and consultants.

10. Few schools or small districts have the information and resources necessary to implement the staff support team approach on their own. Support for the process is available from multiple sources: state education agencies; colleges and universities, staff development programs; regional resource centers; school staff who have already successfully implemented teams. Therefore, some persons need to be available to provide content and process assistance to help a beginning team get underway as well as to provide on-line support as needed.

11. Promoting acceptance of the team may be an on-going process, particularly if it continually introduces techniques which require staff to change approaches or procedures.

State resources CSPD

4. The team is linked through contact people to the state education agency resources and the state's Comprehensive System for Personnel Development.

National resources

5. The team is linked to the information sources of national organizations such as National Inservice Network, National Association of State Departments of Special Education, Council for Exceptional Children, National Staff Development Council.

Implementation —

1. *Administrative support is essential to successful implementation of teams.*

2. *During the planning and preparation step, opinion leaders on the staff who are willing to try the support team approach should be encouraged to join the efforts as early as possible.*

3. *Whenever possible, staff who will be affected by the implementation of a team should be involved in the planning process.*

4. *If the staff support team concept is to be 'piloted', sites should be chosen on the basis of where the approach is most likely to be successful.*

ONCE A STAFF SUPPORT TEAM HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED,

HOW DOES IT EVOLVE?

Stages of Development

Groups of people working together do not become a team in a day. Teams evolve and becoming a team takes time. Regardless of their size or composition, staff support teams go through certain stages of development. The length of each stage varies from team to team and may be as short as one meeting or may last for several months. The sequence of stages is the same for each, and while the specifics of each stage may vary from team to team, the overall nature of each stage is consistent across teams. During this process, some of the activities and feelings of team members may not appear to be productive. This is particularly true during the dissatisfaction stage when a sense of frustration and incompetence frequently emerges. However, working through each stage is a crucial part of the team's evolution if the end result is to be a fully functioning staff support team. A description of the five stages of team development[12] follows:

I. ORIENTATION STAGE

A. Members are somewhat eager and have positive expectations.
B. Members are concerned about and want to know
   1. What the purpose of the staff support team is?
   2. What will they have to do?
   3. Who will lead?
   4. If their efforts will be fruitful?
C. Members are dependent on the situation and whomever is leading.
D. Energy and time are focused on –
   1. Defining the goal(s) and the task of a staff support team.
   2. Devising at least an initial means for carrying out tasks, i.e. team process and procedures.
   3. Determining what skills are needed on a staff support team, which of those skills members lack and need to develop, and how those skills might be learned.
   4. Once determined, trying out and becoming accustomed to team process and procedures.

12. Adapted from R. Lacournier, *The Life Cycle of Groups, (New York, 1980).*

II. DISSATISFACTION STAGE [13]

A. Members become somewhat frustrated.
   1. Positive expectations and reality of team work do not coincide.[14]
   2. Dependence on situation and whomever is leading becomes unsatisfying.
   3. Appropriate resources are not readily available.
   4. Some problems presented to team are not easily solved.

B. Members may feel some anger towards whomever is leading, the goals and task of the team, and other members.

C. Members may feel sad, discouraged.
   1. Feel they cannot do what they hoped.
   2. Feel incompetent.

D. Energy and time are focused on:
   1. Redefining what their task is in 'achieveable' terms.
   2. Determining strategies for solving *long*-term problems.
   3. Determining how best to accomplish their task, including assessing any additional skills needed.
   4. Resolving their sense of frustration and incompetence.
   5. Redefining their expectations so that they are more compatible with what in reality is possible.

III. RESOLUTION STAGE

A. Frustration is dissipating.
   1. Expectations and reality are more closely, if not completely, meshed.
   2. Skill in carrying out procedures and, therefore, in completing task is increased either by additional experiences with the process or specific training activities.

B. Personal satisfaction is increasing.
   1. Process and procedures are being mastered.
   2. Self-esteem is heightened.
   3. Pleasure in accomplishing task (and getting positive feedback from staff through informal or formal monitoring process) outweigh earlier frustrations.

C. Collaborative efforts are beginning to jell.

13. For further information on how to work through this stage as well as all other stages of development, see Johnson and Johnson, *Joining Together* and Miles, *Learning to Work in Groups* listed in the Bibliography. Of particular assistance in conflict resolution are Dyer, *Team Building* and Eisenberg and Delaney, *The Counseling Process*.

14. It is rare to have initial expectations ever matched by reality.

IV. PRODUCTION STAGE

A. Members are once again eager to be part of the staff support team effort.
B. Individuals on the team feel greater autonomy.
C. Members are working well together.
   1. Leadership functions are shared.
   2. Sense of mutality (we sink or swim together) and interdependence has developed.
D. Energy and time are focused on meeting staff needs for support through on-the-spot and follow-up problem solving and consultation and long-term inservice training or staff development.

V. TERMINATION

A. Members may feel –
   1. Sense of sadness because the team is, at least for the time being, ending.
   2. Strong sense of accomplishment.
   3. Last minute urgency to tie-up loose ends.
   4. Regret, if feel they were not able to do everything planned.
B. Energy focused on –
   1. An evaluation of what has been accomplished–quantity and quality.
   2. What needs to be done to complete task for the time being.
   3. If appropriate, how to begin task anew the following school year and what changes if any should be made based on previous year's experience.

Stages of Development –

1. *Teams evolve and go through several stages of development.*

2. *A stage may last for one hour or one year, and there is no way to know ahead of time how long a particular stage will last.*

3. *Dissatisfaction is a natural part of the team process and should not be viewed as a sign that the team is ultimately failing, but rather that it is time for the members to take stock and review goals, processes and resources, rewards, outcomes.*

WHAT IS NECESSARY FOR SUCCESSFUL TEAM OPERATION?

Functioning

A functioning staff support team does not "happen" automatically. The fact that the decision is made and the commitment is there to form a team is not sufficient to guarantee its successful establishment, operation, and integration into the system. There are two areas which need to be addressed while establishing a team to insure its effective functioning. The members need to work together to develop both a collaborative team structure and a set of operating procedures, and, as a team with a particular method of operating, they must offer a viable service to the staff in the school. This section of the monograph outlines these two areas of development and what factors need to be considered in each if a staff support team is to function successfully.

> *The staff support team members need to work collaboratively to develop both a team and a set of operating procedures.*

1. Clarity of mission
   - A. The team needs a philosophy that:
     1. Assures the creation of a team service that will meet the needs of staff and students.
     2. Defines the parameters for establishing goals.

Clear goals

   - B. The team needs clearly defined goals:
     1. That are attainable.
     2. That minimize unrealistic expectations by team members and staff.
   - C. The team needs clearly defined authority—what it can and cannot do—so that

Clear authority

     1. The team is not in conflict with existing authority.
     2. The team is not in an adversarial relationship with any other groups or individuals.
     3. The team will only make decisions on which it can effectively act or will refer individuals to other resources.
2. Collaborative team structure—mutuality.[15]
   - A. Members need to recognize and accept the fact that they are a team.
   - B. Members need to develop positive interdependence—mutuality—through:
     1. Resource interdependence, i.e. an appreciation that each member has skills, and talents that are needed by the team.
     2. Goal interdependence, i.e. that there is consensus, agreement about the goals.
     3. Reward interdependence, i.e. that team, not individual, effort is rewarded.

Mutuality
Interdependence

15. Many people assume if you are part of a team you have skills to function that way. Few people have ever learned how to function in a cooperative. Those who have collaborative skills need to learn how to apply them in this particular situation. For an elaboration of the importance of cooperative interaction and its effects, see D. Johnson and R. Johnson, *The Key to Effective Inservice: Building Teacher-Teacher Collaboration*, listed in the Bibliography.

3. The members need to be competent in specific skills and knowledgeable in specific content area information.
   A. The team members need skills in order to work together effectively and to maintain relationships on the team.

Collaborative skills

   1. Trust building: trusting and trustworthiness.
   2. Communication: sending and receiving.
   3. Leadership: task performance and maintenance of team.
   4. Conflict resolution.
   5. Evaluation: giving and receiving feedback.

   B. The team members need knowledge and skills in order to achieve their task.

Knowledge in specific content areas

   1. Specific information (e.g., behavior change strategies, informal assessment techniques): the basis of the solutions they generate with staff.

Consultation skills

   2. Consultation: the process by which they share in problem solving with staff and learn how to use outside resources.

Shared leadership function

   3. Shared leadership function.
      a. One or more individuals are needed to get the team started in the beginning.
      b. One or more individuals are needed to insure that the team continues toward personally satisfying and effective accomplishment of shared goals.

4. A set of mechanics to initiate and maintain task functioning.[16]
   A. The team needs to determine operating procedures including:

Operating procedures

      1. What is the best time (for members and staff) for meetings?
      2. How long should meetings be?
      3. What will the agenda be and how is it determined?
      4. How can the work be both productive and pleasant?
      5. Who will carry out which leadership functions?
      6. Who will do follow-up consultation?

   B. The operating procedures need to be feasible and efficient.
      1. Meeting time and location need to be convenient to team members.
      2. Meetings should allow sufficient time to talk about organizational details and meet with staff.
      3. Disincentives for participating on the team should be diminished until they are far outweighed by incentives.

Clear agenda

   C. Each meeting should have a clear agenda, preferrably known ahead of time by the team and also by faculty so that any interested staff could participate with the approval of the teacher(s) requesting service.

5. A system of rewards.

Rewards

   A. The team members need jointly owned, tangible or intangible rewards for participating on the team.
   B. The rewards for participating need to be greater than the time and energy required.

16. Ideally, a minimum of a one-day meeting should be held (preferably off-site and away from pressures of daily work) to provide initial orientation activities and training to help a new team get organized.

6. Monitoring mechanisms.
   A. The team needs to develop a dynamic assessment process to determine:
      1. Team needs for:
         a. Training
         b. Resources
         c. Technical assistance.
      2. Staff needs for:
         a. On-the-spot consultation
         b. Long-term inservice training via seminars, discussions, workshops, etc.

Needs assessment

   B. The team needs to maintain a short written record of its activities and decisions to allow for a periodic review and assessment of progress and to keep staff informed of its activities.
   C. The team needs to develop an objective, ongoing process (written or verbal) to determine how well it is functioning, how well it is meeting staff needs, and what it needs to do to be even more effective,[17] including:
      1. How members are working together as a team?
      2. How effectively they are offering their service to staff?

Documentation

   D. The team needs to determine who will be responsible for collecting the assessment and evaluation data.
7. An administrative support base for actual functioning of team.
   A. The team needs *active* support from the building administrator to work out issues and problems such as scheduling classroom coverage.
   B. The administrator needs to facilitate linkages with or access to other resources.
   C. The administrator needs to actively support the team's integration into the overall system.
   D. The administrator on the team should encourage other members' contributions and sense of accomplishment by allowing leadership functions to be shared among team members.

Administrative support

8. A superstructure support base if multiple teams are established in a district, cooperative, collaborative.
   A. The teams should have an individual or individuals either from within the system's administration or from outside the system to provide support by:
      1. Answering questions.
      2. Responding to issues and problems encountered.
      3. Monitoring progress.
   B. The team should have a mechanism for meeting together on a regular basis to:
      1. Share ideas and procedures that have proven successful.
      2. Discuss problems or issues that arise.

Superstructure support base for multiple teams

17. For an elaboration of an evaluation plan of one team model, see S. Stokes Kieran and P. Axelrod, *Inservice Training for Educators of Children with Special Needs: Evaluation Considerations*, Appendix E.

The team must offer a viable service to staff.

1. Accessibility of service.
   A. The team should meet regularly once a week so service is available as need arises.
   B. The meetings should be at a time convenient for all staff.
   C. The meetings should be of sufficient length in order to:
      1. Meet the needs of staff members requesting consultation at any given meeting.
      2. Prevent a backlog of concerns.
   D. The meeting time and location should be the same time each week so staff can count on consistency.

Accessible service

   E. The team needs to develop a system for responding to multiple, simultaneous requests for service, including a determination of:
      1. Who selects which requests are given top priority?
      2. On what basis is the selection made?
      3. How will requests be managed that, for temporary lack of time, cannot be met during regularly scheduled meetings?
   F. The staff needs to be made aware of when and where the team meets and how they can avail themselves of its services.
   G. If follow-up consultation is offered, individuals on the team need to be skilled at and be available to do follow-up consultation.
   H. If service is offered, the team needs to regularly review the status of that service.
2. Benefits of utilization of team.
   A. The team needs to establish and maintain a good record of credibility and performance.

Beneficial service

      1. The team must establish and maintain a high level of trustworthiness with staff.
         a. Focus of meetings needs to be the problem or issue not the competence of the staff member requesting assistance.
         b. The message conveyed should be, "This is a safe place to take a risk and bring your needs."
      2. The team needs to establish and maintain a good record of meeting staff needs including following through until completion on any issue/problem addressed.
   B. The team members need to have good consulting and problem-solving skills in order to be able to utilize content area expertise effectively.

Multidisciplinary background and expertise

   C. The team needs to be able to meet a wide range of staff needs in specific content areas.
      1. Members need to have breath of background training and expertise particularly in education, special education, and psychology to address a wide variety of issues or problems.

Link with supplemental resources

2. There should be back-up resources available to supplement the expertise of teams, e.g., if a reading specialist is not on the team, one should be available to attend a meeting or consult with the team on a case specific or issue specific basis.

D. The sum total of the team efforts should create a service the benefits of which far outweigh any risks staff might feel when requesting service.

3. Administrative support of the value of the service.

A. The team needs *visible* support of the building administrator to lend credibility to its work with staff.

Administrative support

B. The team needs the support of the building administration to actively diminish the risks felt by staff members who bring needs to a team whose membership includes an administrator.

Functioning —

1. *Two areas need to be addressed:*

   a. *The members need to develop a collaborative team structure and a set of operating procedures, and*

   b. *the team needs to offer a viable service.*

2. *Administrative support for the service provided by the team as well as for its actual functioning is essential.*

3. *Leadership functions of getting work done and keeping the group in good working order must be taken care of, but can be done by one or more members of the team.*

4. *A new approach always takes more time initially but will eventually save time.*

ONCE A TEAM IS ESTABLISHED AND FUNCTIONING SUCCESSFULLY, HOW CAN ITS CONTINUATION BE ASSURED?

Maintenance

Every building-based staff support team is both a collaborative group and a provider of services. In order for it to be successful and last, it has to be able to do two things: (1) keep the team members working well together, and (2) provide a useful service to the rest of the staff. Therefore, attention must be paid to both the group or team needs and the task or service needs. The chart on the opposite page illustrates the critical team/group needs and task/service needs that need to be addressed if the team is to be maintained. Since there are two areas of maintenance, the chart is divided into two parts. The left side outlines what a team needs to keep healthy interpersonal relations. The right side, what a team needs to address in order to provide its service and, thereby, accomplish its task. Since both areas of team maintenance must be addressed simultaneously, the two sections of the chart have been placed side by side. Because team structure needs to be attended to in order to maintain the team *and* the task, this need has been placed over the mid-line of the chart where it can extend into each half.

Maintenance —

1. *While the team is providing services it should not neglect itself and its own development.*
2. *Rewards need to be higher than the costs—for those who serve on the team and those who seek its services.*
3. *Evaluation should be an integral part of the team's procedures and the basis for that process should be agreed upon goals which can be attained.*

MAINTENANCE

TEAM/GROUP	TASK/SERVICE

Team Structure

Positive interdependence/mutuality
Joint ownership of goals, tasks, resources, rewards, outcomes: Team members sick or swim together
Goal interdependence: Agreement about purpose of team
Resource interdependence: Agreement about what each member has to offer
Result/reward interdependence: We fail or succeed as a group
Group effort rather than individual effort is rewarded

Interpersonal Skills

Development of skills needed to function collaboratively, effectively:
- Trustbuilding: trusting and trustworthiness.
- Communication: sending and receiving.
- Leadership: Maintenance of interpersonal relations on the team and collaborative efforts.
- Conflict resolution.

Membership

Team composition dynamically maintained to insure representation of different ideas, areas of professional expertise, background and experiences.
New members added skillfully.

Rewards

Maintenance of system of rewards for team membership that are greater than costs of risk, time, energy.

Evaluation– Long- and Short-Range

Monitoring how well group functions as a team, including:
- Membership issues.
- Role issues.
- Skills/Deficits:
  - Communication.
  - Consultation.

Assessing need for training or other forms of assistance based on information gathered from monitoring outlined above.
Assessing usefulness of any technical assistance or training received.

Skills and Knowledge

Knowledge in specific content areas, such as behavior change strategies and informal assessment techniques, to form the basis of the solutions they offer.
Development of consultation and group process skills needed to provide a process by which they meet staff needs.
Development of shared leadership skills and distribution of responsibilities for action that help achieve tasks (e.g., public relations, record keeping) and for tasks themselves (e.g., consultation).
Update of development of new skills, techniques as needed.
Update of information about programs, resources, strategies, materials.

Activity

Setting of specific agenda for each meeting.

Rewards

Maintenance of useful service to staff such that benefits of utilizing team service outweigh costs such as risk, time, energy.

Evaluation– Long- and Short-Range

Monitoring (both formatively and summatively).
- How well team provides service to staff:
  - The process of the service.
  - The content of the service.

Assessing need for training or other forms of assistance based on information gathered from monitoring outlined above.
Assessing usefulness of any kinds of training given, such as workshops.

Accountability

Giving and receiving continual support from:
- Higher levels of authority.
- Those who are using service.

Relationships with Rest of School Staff

Maintenance of positive relations:
- Sharing common goals.
- Providing effective services
- Communicating actions of the team

Integration of Service

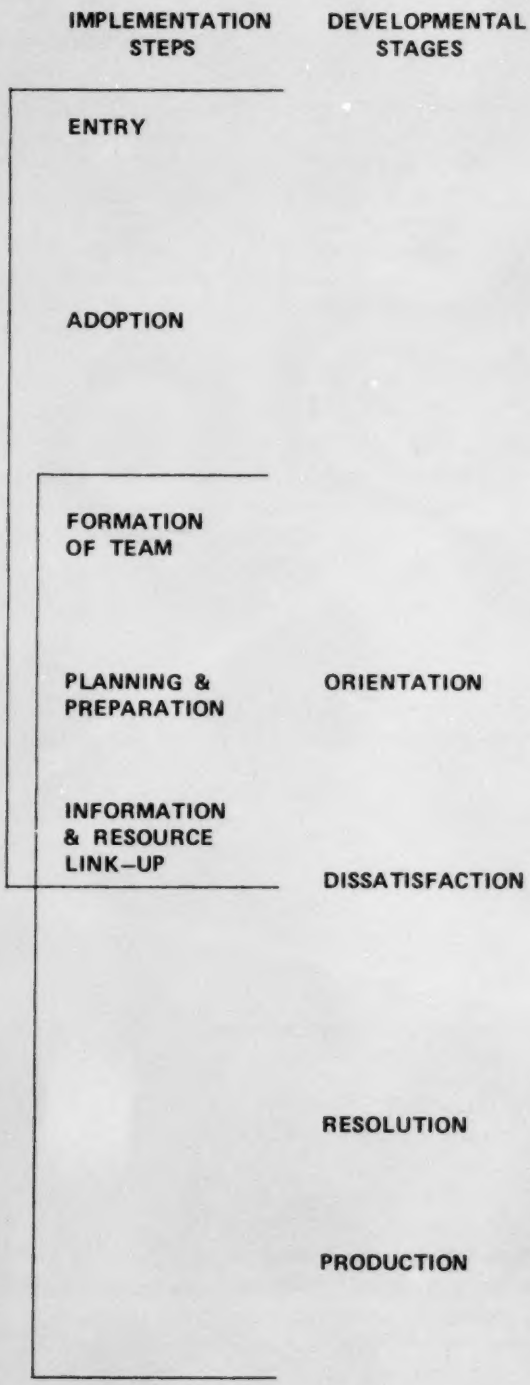
Demonstrating a relationship between the functioning of the team and the goals of the school, school system, the district, state, etc., such that the team becomes an integral part of the system.

WHAT ARE THE TASKS OF A LEADER WHO IS ESTABLISHING A SCHOOL–BASED STAFF SUPPORT TEAM?

Anyone who chooses to facilitate the establishment of a staff support must keep in mind two points. First, a team is a group within a group; that is, the team is embedded in a larger organization of staff within a school setting. While the team goes through several stages of development, so also does the rest of the staff as it adjusts to working with the team and to its impact on the school. This adjustment is the focus of the second point; the team is both a group providing a service *and* an innovation. Anyone, whether from inside or outside of the school who is facilitating the establishment of a team must, therefore, attend not only to the development of the team, but the developing response of the staff to the changes which result from the innovation.

At each step of implementation and each stage of development of a staff support team there are team behaviors and simultaneously there are school staff behaviors which provide the leader with clues to the concerns of those involved in the process and, in turn, signal the tasks which the leader must address if a team is to be successfully established. The tasks of the leader are twofold in nature; there are group process tasks and procedural tasks to be addressed. Group process tasks focus on how people relate to each other and how they feel about those relationships, whereas procedural tasks focus on how things are done, how information is disseminated, how a service is performed.

An integrated perspective of the tasks of a team development leader is provided in the chart. The steps of team implementation and the stages of development provide the timeframe. For each step or stage, the school staff and team behavior are noted and the group process and procedure tasks to be addressed by the leader are described.



TEAM DEVELOPMENT: LEADERSHIP GUIDELINES

SCHOOL STAFF AND TEAM BEHAVIOR	GROUP PROCESS TASKS TO BE ADDRESSED	PROCEDURAL TASKS TO BE ADDRESSED
Depends on school and/or system variables and approach strategy. Genuine interest if potential team outcomes can be tied to goals and problems of system, and if previous success data provided. Still, personal and operational concerns remain.	Attending to concerns of potential early adopters.	Selecting appropriate entry level – Building? System? Determining best information delivery format to generate interest. Responding to potential adopter questions and concerns.
If adoption decision is from "top down," information to and initial interest of staff may be minimal. Staff will have high levels of information ("What is all this about?") and *personal* ("How is this going to affect me?") concerns, or	If adoption decision is from "top down," hearing concerns and planning to meet them. Attempting to secure expressed staff commitment, or	If decision is from "top down," developing presentation of information to staff. Beginning to address personal concerns. Securing staff acceptance or willingness to try. Organizing and preparing to implement, or
If staff is included in the adoption decision, some key person will be convinced, but *informational* concerns (particularly about "nuts and bolts" of the operation) and *personal* concerns remain. Some still uncertain about adoption and use. A few "early laggards" may try to block the adoption.	Hearing concerns and planning to meet them. Involving staff in the planning. Attempting to secure commitment and active participation by positive opinion leaders.	If the staff is included in the adoption decision, developing and delivering further information to staff, giving more details, addressing likely concerns. Organizing and preparing to implement.
Team becoming jelled. Members eager; have positive expectations. Team focus on defining goals and procedures. Varying degrees of group process and consultation skill among team members. Non-team members may be somewhat hesitant about the idea, may have some strong anxieties about the whole framework and how it is to be carried out. A few risk-takers and people with severe needs bring problems to the team. Satisfied users spread the word about gaining real assistance.	Facilitating communication within team and of team with staff. Developing interdependence and mutuality of team members. Promoting growth in group process, collaborative, and leadership skills. Identifying and removing disincentives and maximizing team incentives.	Team problem solving focusing on procedures and format for operation of the team with emphasis on clarity of goals and operation. Getting needed resources, training and technical assistance. Developing joint ownership of goals, tasks, resources, rewards and positive interdependence. Removing disincentives and maximizing incentives for staff.
Team accustomed to operating procedures. Emergence of problems. Members feel sense of frustration, incompetence. Team focus on determining sources of problems, appropriate solutions, and redefining expectations.	Evaluating efforts to date. Problems and dissatisfaction of members emerging. Determining sources of team member frustration and sense of incompetence. Consolidating team communication skills. Resolving sense of frustration and incompetence.	Team problem solving focusing on evaluating progress, determining sources of team member frustration. Redefining goals and procedures in achievable terms and securing needed resources and assistance. Examining use of staff teams: taking steps to facilitate greater utilization.
Members of staff more accustomed to using the team. Personal and information concerns decreasing.		
Team focus on improvement of operation and impact. Competing opinions more readily meshed. Group identity and mutuality are strong within team. Leadership functions are more dispersed among team members. Collaboration is enhanced. Members of the staff feel the team is an important part of the school's operations; individuals bring problems, issues, and concerns regularly. Climate of professional collaboration increasing within entire school setting.	Monitoring and facilitating collaboration and communication. Facilitating leadership by all team members. Staff periodically evaluating team effort to insure use, effectiveness, responsiveness, and trustworthiness. Consolidating group identity.	Team problem solving focusing on increasing impact on staff and students and on greater use of team. Team and staff evaluation of outcomes. Searching for ways to mesh team with other positive programs of the school. Insuring systematic accessibility of resources and assistance.
Team is a full part of the school. System for selecting and preparing new members developed. Team and school dealing with day to day concerns but also developing a long range perspective, with attention to planning for change and action. Greater range of needs being addressed.	Monitoring team efforts for use, communication, perceptions of responsiveness and trustworthiness. Assessing team sense of mutuality and group identity, and staff sense of meaningfulness of team service and support.	Monitoring team for task and goal focus, impact and use. Evaluating format, processes, and outcomes. Achieving strong links with other school programs and resources. Developing continuous long range plans.

WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL POINTS TO REMEMBER ABOUT ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING A SCHOOL–BASED STAFF SUPPORT TEAM?

Summary

What are the essentials of the staff support team concept?

- A staff support team is a school-based problem-solving group whose purpose is to provide consultation to staff as requested.
- There is no ideal model for a team. Composition varies according to the needs and the constraints of the school setting in which the team is housed. There may however, be an ideal match between a particular model and the needs of a school staff.
- Many, if not most, schools already have elements which can be modified, added to, or given an overall structure, direction and needed assistance to become a staff support team.

How is a school-based staff support team established?

- Certain factors are critical to successful implementation:
  - Clearly evidenced administrative commitment and support.
  - Collaborative planning for implementation.
  - Continuous on-line support to help individuals solve problems for themselves.
  - Clarity of goal and roles.
  - A school climate conducive to change.
- Administrative support is essential to successful implementation of teams.
- During the planning and preparation, opinion leaders on the staff who are willing to try the support team approach should be encouraged to join the efforts as early as possible.
- Whenever possible staff who will be affected by the implementation of a team should be involved in the planning process.
- If the staff support team concept is to be 'piloted,' sites should be chosen on the basis of where the approach is most likely to be successful.

Once a staff support team has been established, how does it evolve?

- Teams go though five stages of development; orientation, dissatisfaction, resolution, production, and termination.
- A stage may last for one hour or one year, and there is no way to know ahead of time how long a particular stage will last.
- Dissatisfaction is a natural part of the teaming process and should not be viewed as a sign that the team is ultimately failing, but rather that it is time for the members to take stock and review goals, processes, resources, rewards, and outcomes.

What is necessary for successful team functioning?

- Two areas need to be addressed:
  1. The members need to work together to form a collaborative team structure and to develop a set of operating procedures.
  2. The team needs to offer a viable service to staff.
- Administrative support for the service provided by the team as well as for its actual functioning is essential.
- Leadership functions of getting work done and keeping the group in good working order must be taken care of, but can be done by one or more members of the team.
- A new approach always takes more time initially but will eventually save time.

Once a team is established and functioning successfully, how can its continuation be assured?

- Two areas of maintenance need to be addressed: the team and the service it provides.
- While the team is providing services it should not neglect itself and its own development.
- Rewards need to be higher than the costs–for those who serve on the team and those who seek its services.
- Evaluation should be an integral part of the team's procedures and the basis for that process should be agreed upon goals which can be attained.

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APPENDIX A

MODELS OF TEAMS

Team Name: **Assistance Team ***

Features —

1. *Membership is multidisciplinary.*
2. *Principal is the leader.*
3. *Activities focus on:*
   - *Expediting the referral process*
   - *Assessing and meeting inservice training needs of teachers.*
4. *Model has been implemented on a school system-wide basis.*

Structure Principal and 4–6 staff members selected by principal from: regular classroom teachers, counselors, special education teachers, school psychologists, social workers, reading teachers, parents, speech clinicians, and physical therapists.

Superstructure Advisory Board composed of team leader from every school in the system. Purpose is to provide vehicle for teams to lend support to each other and to provide a network of resources to be used in inservice training activities

Function Provides support upon request to classroom teachers working with exceptional or potentially exceptional students. Support can be crisis intervention, technical assistance, review of referral, development and delivery of inservice training.

Activities

1. Facilitate and expedite student assessment and placement.
2. Assess building-level and individual needs of general and special educators for inservice training.
3. Provide and/or secure technical assistance and inservice training activities for staff on either individual or group basis.

Contact Person Fred J. Baars, Consultant, Staff Development, Division for Exceptional Children, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Raleigh, North Carolina 27611. (919) 733–6081.

***For further detail about this model, see Fred J. Barrs, The assistance team inservice model succeeds in Wake County, North Carolina, *Counterpoint*, November 1980. A slide tape presentation describing the model is also available from Fred J. Barrs at the above mentioned address.**

Team Name: **Building Team**

Features —

1. *Membership is multidisciplinary.*
2. *Principal is formal leader.*
3. *Activities focus on*
   —Helping teachers with specific children
   —Providing staff development
4. *Model has been implemented in rural areas.*

Structure

While composition varies according to the availability of resource people and the decision of the staff in each school, membership typically includes: building principal, regular class teacher(s), a special education or consulting teacher, and the counselor if the school has one. The school psychologist and special education resource people participate in team meetings on an on-call basis.

Principal is formal leader of team.

Function

Provides problem solving vehicle for issues or concerns related to specific students or instruction.

Activities

1. Discussing the needs of and serving children experiencing learning problems.
2. Helping teachers solve instructional problems.
3. Promoting collaborative efforts in designing and implementing child-centered instruction.
4. Acting as a device for on-line staff development.

Contact Person

Walt Mickler, Area Education Resource Center, 3023 Canterbury, Salina, Kansas 67401. (913) 823–7263.

Team Name: **Instructional Support Team**

Features —

1. *Model incorporates the role of the consulting teacher.*
2. *Membership is multidisciplinary.*
3. *Team activities focus on:*
   - *Discussion of building wide issues or concerns as well as teacher needs related to specific children*
   - *Assessing and securing inservice training for teachers.*
4. *Model has been implemented at elementary and middle school level.*

Structure

Building principal, consulting teacher, at least two classroom teachers. Most teams include a special education teacher. Those teams established at the middle school level including a counselor.

Chairperson varies from team to team.

Function

Provides support to staff for discussing building or individual concerns; offers consultation and follow-up assistance to teacher requesting help with particular student and secures or provides appropriate inservice training for members of or the entire staff.

Activities

1. Biweekly meeting forum for discussion of building issues or teacher concerns about a student.
2. Consultation during the meeting and follow-up assistance by the teacher consultant to the staff member requesting help with a particular child.
3. Secures or provides inservice training sessions.

Contact Person

Michael J. Horvath, Monroe County Community School Corporation, 315 North Drive, Bloomington, Indiana 47401. (812) 339–3481.

Team Name: **Staff Support Team**

Features —

1. *Multidisciplinary membership.*
2. *Shared leadership functions with some responsibilities fulfilled by one member who is* not *an administrator.*
3. *Incorporates but does not require the use of a teacher consultant in schools where that role is utilized.*
4. *Activities focus on:*
   - *Addressing general issues of one or more staff members*
   - *Meeting individual staff members' needs related to a specific child*
   - *Securing or providing staff development activities based on needs assessment.*
5. *Model has been implemented in urban and suburban settings.*

Structure

Two classroom teachers and one of each of the following: building administrator or designee, special educator, and professional support person such as a psychologist, guidance counselor, or an adjustment counselor. When the role of teacher consultant is utilized in the school, that person is a member of the team. Other specialists may be team members or may participate in team meetings on a case-specific basis.

Most leadership functions are shared by team members; some responsibilities, such as agenda setting, are carried out by one member who is not an administrative representative. When the role of teacher consultant is utilized in that school, that individual usually becomes the team facilitator and fulfills those leadership functions that are not shared by team members.

Function

Provides consultation to school staff. Offers weekly problem solving forum at which one or more staff can discuss issues related to specific needs of faculty or students and receive immediate as well as follow-up assistance. Assistance can be crisis intervention, short-term consultation, continuous support, the securing of information, resources or training for those requesting the team's service.

Activities

1. Weekly discussion and problem-solving forum for one or more staff.
2. Follow-up assistance, including: classroom observation, consultation, the expedition of the formal evaluation process, the securing of needed resources.
3. Assessment of staff needs for inservice training or professional development.
4. Securing or providing inservice staff development activities based on needs assessment.

Contact Person

Shari Stokes, Eliot–Pearson Department of Child Study, Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts 02155. (617) 628–5000, ext. 291.

Team Name: **Teacher Assistance Team***

Features —

1. *Members are primarily, if not totally, classroom teachers.*
2. *Focus of the team is on helping teachers cope with children in the classroom who have learning and/or behavioral problems.*
3. *Model has been implemented at the elementary and high school level.*

Structure

Core of the team consists of three regular class teachers; the referring teacher and the parent are the fourth and fifth members. Eligibility of non-regular class teachers to serve on the core team determined by the classroom teachers. Specialists are often invited to participate on a case specific basis.

Team leader and coordinator is one of the three core members.

Function

Provides day-to-day problem solving unit to help classroom teachers cope with students who are having learning and/or behavioral problems in the classroom.

Activities

1. Assist teachers in developing strategies to cope with children who are having learning and/or behavioral problems in the classroom or to obtain swift action on referrals.
2. Provide direct assistance to teachers experiencing difficulty carrying out mainstream recommendations or help those teachers obtain follow-up assistance from special education personnel.

Contact Person

James Chalfant, Department of Special Education, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona 84721. (601) 626–3248.

*For further details about this model, see James C. Chalfant, Margaret VanDusen Pysh, and Robert Moultrie, Teacher assistance teams: a model for within-building problem solving, *Learning Disabilities Quarterly*, 1979, 2:85–96.

APPENDIX B

STAFF SUPPORT TEAMS

Critical Variables

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From *What Works in Inservice* (Proceedings of a presentation at the Council for Exceptional Children Annual Convention) Bloomington, Indiana: National Inservice Network, 1980.

STAFF SUPPORT TEAMS
Critical Variables
by
Shari Stokes and Penny Axelrod

The purpose of this paper is to describe a model for providing inservice training to educators mainstreaming children with special educational needs. The model was developed by the authors at Tufts University in association with the Education Collaborative of Greater Boston as part of a United States Office of Special Education funded training project[1] and has been implemented in seventeen elementary schools. The key element of the model is the creation of multidisciplinary, building-based Staff Support Team which provides inservice training, via consultation, to the staff members of a school. The paper includes a rationale for the establishment of building-based teams, a description of their concept and function, and an analysis of features which, based on experience, appear to be critical to their successful functioning.

Rationale for Staff Support Teams

The mandate of Public Law 94—142 has imposed a new reality on school personnel. Contrary to the prior practice of having children with special needs taken from the regular class teacher to be taught by specially trained people, a new approach has been mandated which requires that special needs children must receive an increasingly greater proportion of their education in regular classes. The regular class teachers must, therefore, have confidence in their ability to teach children with special educational needs. Many of these teachers also need to develop new strategies to accomodate a more heterogeneous group of children in the classroom.

In addition to changes in attitudes and practices which are imposed by the reality of Public Law 94—142, a change in the role relationships of school personnel must occur if the law is to be fully implemented. Whereas special educators, regular educators, and specialists once functioned, primarily, in separate domains, they are now being asked to share in the educating of children. They must work together and to do so must establish relationships in which each appreciates the other's role and the possibilities and constraints imposed upon each other.

Clearly some mechanism is needed to support educators who are faced with demands for changes in attitudes, practices, and role relationships and to enable them to respond effectively to their new responsibilities.

Staff Support Teams: The Concept

A method that has proved effective[2] in providing support to school staff is the establishment of a building-based Staff Support Team. This team is comprised of personnel from various professions, and its purpose is to provide a weekly forum for one or more faculty to discuss issues or topics in general or related to specific children and to receive consultation as well as follow-up assistance in serving children. By providing individualized support and assistance, this team can help regular class teachers feel more competent in working with a wider variety of children. The team can also provide a structure for specialists, regular educators, and special educators who are staff members to join together to plan cooperatively for the education of children, particularly those with special needs. Unlike many teams whose focus is children, the primary purpose of the building-based team described here is serving members of the staff. This distinction is emphasized by the name, Staff Support Team.

1. The project is entitled "Inservice Training for Educators of Children with Special Needs."

2. Kieran, Shari Stokes and Axelrod, Penny, *Inservice Education of Children with Special Needs: Evaluation Considerations.* Paper presented at Eastern Educational Research Association meeting, Norfolk, Virginia, March 5—8, 1980.

Staff Support Team Function

The Staff Support Team provides immediate crisis intervention, short-term assistance, or ongoing support to any member of the school staff who requests its services. For example, a teacher who is working with a child whose behavior is interfering with his learning and development could join with the Team to brainstorm possibilities for intervention. Another member of the staff could request the Team to help in making suggestions for and/or locating the sources of specialized instructional materials. The Staff Support Team could facilitate a series of discussions, throughout the school year, between a regular class teacher and other staff members to coordinate the multiplicity of special services provided to a child to ensure consistency and to avoid duplication of effort. To use Havelock's[3] (1973) descriptors, the Team's role can be that of catalyst, a solution giver, a process helper, and/or a resource linker.

Since the general function of the Team is staff support, the specific role will depend upon the needs of that school's staff, will vary from school to school and over the course of time. The question of role is addressed in the initial stages of the Team's formation and throughout its existence and so can readily evolve to meet the changing needs of staff.

Critical Features

Since the inception of the Inservice Training project in June, 1978, information has been collected on the implementation of the Staff Support Team model in urban and suburban settings, large and small school districts, and in elementary schools in which the number of classroom teachers totaled between ten and thirty-two. An analysis of the data indicates that the successful Team is visible, accessible, competent, non-intimidating, sanctioned by those in the power structure, and self-supporting. If a Staff Support Team is to be viewed by the school staff as offering a viable service and if the Team is to develop a self-supporting mode of operation, then the following features are critical.

Multidisciplinary Membership

Since many teachers fear that appearance at a Staff Support Team meeting suggests that their competence is open to question, utilization of the Team's services can be perceived as a high-risk situation. The composition of the Team is designed to minimize this risk factor and, in addition, to maximize the Team's ability to address the full range of needs expressed by a school staff. Included in the Team should be two regular class teachers and one of each of the following: building administrator, special education teacher, ancillary support professional such as the school psychologist, guidance counselor or social worker. The multidisciplinary membership creates a Team that can offer a broad range of perspectives, ideas, resources and thereby increases the likelihood that the Team can provide support and/or assistance to any member of the school staff. Moreover, the whole concept of joint planning and implementation of educational programs for children is fostered by the model provided by the Team. In addition, membership from each of the four areas of expertise provides specific benefits to the Team.

The presence of the regular education teachers on the Staff Support Team increases the likelihood that a regular class teacher who comes to the group will feel that it is an empathic body and helps to diminish the often reported feelings of incompetence that regular educators experience when they discuss an issue or concern with specialists whose very titles suggest higher levels of expertise. The regular education members also offer a perspective on the feasibility of implementing a Team-generated idea in a regular classroom. Together with the individual from special education, the regular education members offer curriculum and classroom management ideas and suggestions for modifications to address the frequent requests for consultation in those areas.

3. Havelock, Ronald G., *The Change Agent's Guide to Innovation in Education*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Educational Technology Publications, 1973.

Because experience has indicated that teachers frequently request consultation on issues which relate to a child's emotional development or adjustment in the classroom, the ancillary support professional on the Team must have the background to address these issues. Therefore, the support services represented on the Team should be psychology, guidance, or social work. Additional representatives from other fields, such as remedial reading, speech and language remediation, can be added to provide critical information to the Team whether by regular representation or on a case-specific basis.

The administrative representative offers a perspective on the feasibility of Team-generated ideas with respect to the school's or school district's fiscal and management policies and provides an initial administrative review of any idea which requires action at either the building or system level.

In summary, these five members (two regular educators, a building administrator, a special educator, and an ancillary support professional) constitute the core of the Staff Support Team. As was indicated above, members may be added with the following two cautionary reminders. First, the purpose of the Team is to support staff members who come, not to overwhelm them. The larger the number of Team members, the more likely the Team meeting will be perceived as a tribunal rather than a non-intimidating, empathic forum of staff members. Second, while the membership is multidisciplinary, a balance between regular educators and "others" needs to be maintained.

Administrative Support

The presence of an administrative representative, at least during the initial year of Team development, demonstrates institutional support for both the concept and the actual functioning of the group. Without this *visible* support, the success of the Team is severely hampered and may be totally curtailed. On the other hand, the Team should *not* be seen as an arm of the administrator, but rather as a process of support to which the administrator contributes in any manner possible.

Atmosphere of Equality

Each member must be able to contribute to the Team on an equal footing. No one member runs the Team or makes decisions for it. The Team is multidisciplinary; therefore, not every member can be expected to make the same contribution. If, however, the members are going to be able to act as a consulting body to the staff, every member must feel as though s/he has *equal* opportunity to contribute to the process and that his/her contribution is valued. The consulting process must directly enlist the expertise of the individual requesting assistance. In a sense the Team becomes composed of six people—the individual staff member requesting assistance plus the five regular Team members.

Role of the Follow-up Consultant

In addition to the weekly meetings, one of the important services offered by the Staff Support Team is follow-up consultation to the individual who presents an issue or concern. One individual on the Team must have major responsibility for providing the follow-up consultation service or ensuring that it is offered. With the exception of the administrator (whose power to evaluate makes him/her unsuitable) anyone on the Team who is particularly competent in classroom observation, remedial and behavior management strategies, and consultation with peers would be suitable for this role. This individual should also have credibility with other staff, be a positive, active member of the school building community, and have time available to carry out the consultation.

Role of the Team Facilitator

The member of the Team who assumes this role ensures that the Team functions smoothly and that the school's staff is aware of the full range of services it can provide. The responsibilities

of this role include: acting as the liaison between the school staff and the Team; carrying out the organizational maintenance tasks such as facilitating the contact procedure for those requesting service and the process by which the agenda is set; maintaining the schedule; contacting staff to indicate at which meeting their issue or concern will be addressed; and making sure that records of the Team's activities, including evaluative data, are being collected and maintained in whatever manner the members have agreed is appropriate. The individual also facilitates Team meetings so that they run smoothly and efficiently and so that the needs of the staff member(s) are addressed to the extent to which the Team is capable of addressing them. During the team meetings, this individual fosters the atmosphere of equality and the cooperative efforts of the Team with the participating staff member. As is true with the role of follow-up consultant, any member of the Team, with the exception of the administrative representative, can fill the role of Team facilitator. While not essential to the successful operation of the Team, the same person can fill the role of follow-up consultant and Team facilitator. If a school uses the role of Teacher Consultant, then this person would be a natural choice for both roles.

Accessibility of Service

While choice of meeting time (before, during, or after school) will vary depending upon the kind of arrangements for coverage of classes that can be made, the time of day the Team meets should be convenient for all staff. The Team should meet once a week so that the service is available as the needs arises, and the meeting time and location should be the same each week so that the staff can count on consistency. There should also be sufficient time at each meeting to take care of organizational details such as an update on activities and self-evaluation, but also to meet with a member of the staff. The Team should meet a minimum of an hour so that there is sufficient time available to address at least one and possibly two requests for support/consultation each week. Occasionally, in the school year, the requests for consultation may exceed the Team's ability to meet faculty's needs during the weekly sessions. When staff members have to wait three or four weeks to meet with the Team, they often begin to feel that the service is not readily available. Therefore, at these times, the Team's services should be expanded (temporarily lengthening the meeting time or the number of times the Team meets in a week) or supplemented (providing one-to-one consultation until the requesting staff member can meet with the Team).

If the Staff Support Team is going to be viewed by the faculty as offering a viable service and if it is to develop a self-supporting mode of operation, then the Team must have the following features: multidisciplinary membership with two general educators; administrative support; a regularly scheduled, weekly meeting of at least one hour at a time that is convenient to all staff; an atmosphere of equality at the meeting; and members of the Team who are competent to fill the roles of follow-up consultant and facilitator.

Summary

This paper has presented a description of a model of inservice training which is designed to meet the needs of school personnel who are carrying out the mandate of Public Law 94–142. The key element of the model is the creation of a multidisciplinary, building-based Staff Support Team which provides consultation to the staff members of a school. A rationale for the establishment of a building-based Teams, a description of their concept and function, and an analysis of features critical to their successful functioning have been delineated. The experiences of implementing the Staff Support Team concept of inservice training and the data gathered throughout the last two and a half years of the project provide ample evidence that the training model offers a mechanism to support educators who are faced with demands for changes in attitudes, practices, and role relationships and to enable them to respond effectively to their new responsibilities.

APPENDIX C

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT TEAMS:

Their Initiation in Local School Buildings

By

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INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT TEAMS: THEIR INITIATION IN LOCAL SCHOOL BUILDINGS

by
Michael J. Horvath and Lynn Baker

"It's lonely at the top." Randy Newman sang those words several years ago. In a school building, all too often, it is lonely not only at the top but in the classroom as well. Being in a room full of students may not be considered a lonely situation at first glance. However, when problems exist in that classroom (what classroom does not have problems?) the teacher frequently feels lonely. To admit there is a problem is often interpreted by others as a sign of weakness. A teacher's request for help can prove to be an isolating and, at times, anxiety-producing experience.

Members of other professions seek their colleagues' help when faced with problems. A patient may in fact feel more assured after hearing a second opinion. The doctor is not viewed as incompetent, but rather as thorough and caring. Unfortunately, this is not true enough of educators. Professionals with skills for providing help almost certainly exist in every school. Learning how to put those skills to work in order to help problem solve and to improve the school is the focus of our team efforts.

With the passage of P.L. 94–142 and an increase of mainstreamed students, the special education teacher is viewed as the "expert" who can provide help. However, the special educator, in most schools, has a caseload which prohibits consultation with teachers regarding mainstreamed students. The majority of regular classroom teachers have not had special education training and feel insecure with their skills for dealing with mainstreamed students. Often, they are "bewitched" by the apparent mystical skills of special educators whom they view as having special curative powers. When problem learners are passed-off to a specialized person to deal with, in some people's minds the students may seem much more severe than they actually are. Further, not all problem students are "special education" students. Often the distinction between a "special" student and a "regular" student is, at best, nebulous. The student presents problems regardless of his/her label. Often teachers fail to become deeply involved in working with such children, missing out on the opportunity to de-mystify instructional and learning processes for "hard-to-teach" students. They do not get the opportunity to build their self-confidence and sense of efficacy about teaching special kids. They do not get the opportunity to interact and mutually problem-solve with their colleagues around specific instructional challenges they face. Feeling responsible for the educational gains made by a special student can be a real confidence building experience for a classroom teacher.

Developing an effective collegial support system for dealing with teachers' problems is becoming increasingly important. Educators are beginning to recognize the need for schools to establish some type of formal or informal teacher support system (e.g. teacher centers). Traditionally, the system of teacher support and inservice has left the burden upon the teacher to track down an article or book or to hope for a relevant training session on the two or three "inservice" days throughout the year. Traditional inservice has not proved very popular or efficient. The principal, given his/her ever expanding duties, cannot meet this need. Instructional Support Teams represent our attempt to develop a viable, collegial support mechanism for school building personnel. Support teams currently exist in various stages of development throughout the country. James Chalfant, Margaret Van Dusen Pysh and Robert Moultrie have developed Teacher Assistance Teams to deal with mainstreamed students. Other project directors throughout the country involved with building teams include Shari Stokes, Peter Demers, Theresa Monaco and Dave Dawson.

Chalfant et. al., (1979) list five assumptions which form a rationale for the development of a building support team:

1. Frequently, a regular educator can help a student with a behavior and/or learning problem.
2. In some instances, the regular educator may need additional help in order to effectively teach these students.
3. Teachers learn best by actually working with the child with a problem.
4. The teaching staff possesses a great deal of knowledge and talent.
5. More problems can be resolved by working together than by working alone.

Though not providing it in the traditional "stand up" manner, a building support team can be an important inservice vehicle in a building. Since we are operating in a local school system, we have had to deal with a great deal of skepticism. Federal projects and inservice conjure up all types of images and feelings. The notion of inservice in the Monroe County Community School Corporation (MCCSC) is somewhat traditional. Inservice takes place, usually, in another building and is provided by an outsider. Teams as inservice providers may look good on paper and appear to work elsewhere, but making team support a reality in any environment where it is untested is a challenge. The most difficult proving ground is the school itself. The program must be proved effective before gaining full acceptance. The everyday realities of a school can appear quite imposing, but must be realized and incorporated into the planning and operation of any innovation, in this case building teams.

We have been involved with the formation of building support teams in six schools (five elementary and one middle) in the MCCSC. The teams are a component of the consulting teacher project in the six schools. While a consultant is not necessary for a team to operate, he or she is clearly an asset. Presently, the six teams are in various stages of development. Each is dealing with their school's distinct problems. None of the teams are functioning as a "textbook" building support team where members sit, discuss, and problem solve an instructional problem presented by a teacher. As mentioned above, this can be threatening to a teacher. A trust level must first be built. Eventually, we hope child centered discussions will be integrated into the function of our teams.

Each school's team has a somewhat different composition. All have regular educators and a principal. Four include a special educator. Some teams include one or more of the following: librarian, Title I teacher, assistant principal. Currently, the teams are discussing more general, school-wide problems, e.g. grading, addition of a resource room, library utilization, problems created by mainstreaming, and discipline. The notion is that if the remainder of the staff begin to view the team as a change agent in the school, one capable of positive action and not just another committee, its acceptance will begin to grow. Expecting faculty members to be willing to present a problem to a newly formed team composed of peers and the principal, at least initially, is probably unrealistic. Other than an occasional exception, such a notion is rather foreign to a public school. Anything new will usually be viewed with suspicion. Trust must first be established. Our teams, for the most part, are in this trust building stage. They are selling themselves to their staffs. These issues were considered from the outset and will be discussed later in this paper.

As stated earlier, most teams are currently building their own agendas. They are basing agenda items on issues that they feel are of concern to their colleagues. They have not and will not limit themselves to special education concerns. Becoming labeled a "special education team" would severely limit their scope, effectiveness and acceptance. All the teams view themselves as support systems for their faculties. Each team is unique, but all share common purposes and long range goals. These include, but are not limited to the following: an opportunity for professionals to share and to problem solve; an opportunity for teachers to determine their inservice topic(s); an opportunity to help the staff solve instructional problems by using resources within the building; an opportunity to promote confidence and unity among the staff; an opportunity to create a forum for the expression of any instructional or building concern(s).

To promote trust and the achievement of the above, the teams have opened their meetings to any interested faculty members. Likewise, agenda items may be suggested by faculty members. Further, this helps avoid a "we–they" situation and the misconception that the team is the Delphic Oracle possessing all the answers. The team is working with and for its colleagues. Most teams are meeting every other week. Each team has agreed that meeting simply for the sake of meeting, without a clear purpose, is not wise. Thus far, there has been no shortage of issues for discussion and action. At the outset, regularly scheduled meetings appear advantageous. There are many things to discuss: the staff sees the team as an active group and a comfortableness begins to grow among team members as they experience some success. The teams meet either before or after school (breakfast meetings seem to be popular). While we realize that this is not ideal, it is one of those public school realities that cannot be avoided.

In addition to team members and other interested staff, a project consultant attends each meeting. A consultant is assigned to school teams for the purposes of supporting and training team members. In addition, project consultants monitor the team as an outsider and assist in preparing recommendations for group process improvements based on observations and learnings gleaned from all the teams. The principal, as much as possible, is a member in equal standing with all other members. This may be difficult to achieve. Many factors influence his/her stature as a team member. Among these are: his/her administrative style, the influence of other principals or administrators, a teacher's perception of the role of a principal, the principal's commitment to a team, and his/her perception of what the team will be and do (will s/he perceive it as taking away authority?). Some of these factors may never be eliminated, but must be considered when initiating a team. Several principals addressed some of the above issues by stating that they would not be the chairperson and primary motivator. The team is a support for teachers and they felt the initiative should be with the teachers. They did demonstrate support for the teams from their inception by attending organizational meetings, providing input, and being team members.

The consulting teacher's responsibilities on each team have varied. Some are the chairpersons of their teams while others function as regular members. All have been instrumental in planning their school support teams. These efforts will be discussed later. Through their unique roles, the consultants have been catalysts during the team building process. Each consulting teacher is in contact with many teachers throughout the day and thus has a feel for the faculty's concerns. Through exercising these roles, they have come to be more aware of both administrative and teacher problems and viewpoints and are attempting to bridge that gap when possible.

All team members function as equals. They discuss, suggest and participate in implementation of team decisions. The team decides on a chairperson from among its members. The chairperson builds the agenda and schedules and arranges the meetings. Compiling minutes for each meeting is often the chairperson's responsibility.

Team maintenance is crucial and the consultants have been concerned about this from the beginning. Too often, things begin at a school and die two months later from lack of interest and commitment. The faculty must be made aware of what the team is discussing and the results of these discussions. Minutes of the meeting can help to meet this need, but then should not be relied upon as the sole means of communication with the faculty. The intent is to bring the faculty to the point where they view the team as an important resource, one they will feel comfortable going to for help or for discussion of school-wide concerns. Another piece of paper in the mailbox does not do much to build up these feelings. One tactic being used by an MCCSC team involves the team members dividing the staff among themselves, forming a communication network. Each team member is responsible for talking to a certain number of staff members. Thus, the team members discuss their meetings and conduct ongoing needs assessments by discovering what is important to the faculty. Some teams have periodically asked to be placed on the agendas of faculty meetings in order to report the team's progress. The point is repeatedly made that the faculty members are always welcome to attend the meetings.

Our teams have been fully operative for three months, with three months having been spent developing the teams. Discussion and planning of the team venture began with ideas among project staff as to what we felt teams could do and how they would do it. Our planning progressed in stages moving from ourselves to the consulting teachers, to the principals, to the building teams, with the final step being a presentation to the entire staff of the schools.

Teams were written into our project, but had not been developed during our first year. Our initial presentation of the team idea to the consulting teachers was met with a fair amount of skepticism. Their initial concerns about the team venture included:

1. Teachers will not have the time to devote to a team.
2. Teachers will view it as another committee.
3. When will the team meet?
4. How is a team different from this or that committee?
5. Is it a special education committee?
6. Teachers will not take a classroom problem to a group of peers.

The nature of their concerns and feedback suggest that we should have more clearly presented the establishment of our instructional teams as an evolutionary process. The team would initially be concerned with building-level problems and take on new responsibilities as the team became accepted and trusted by the staff. From our initial presentation, the consultants were very wary of a scenario in which the teams would be selected and operating within a month. This was not intended but was what we must have conveyed.

The next phase focused on building principals. In planning for a meeting with the building principals, we used all the information gained from our discussion with the consulting teachers. We had a definition of a team and some central goals in mind, but it was clear that we would have to encourage each school to develop their own version in an effort to individualize and operationalize those goals. There were too many variables from school to school to expect one model to fit all schools. The teams have all developed similar goals (e.g., better communication among staff members, a support system for teachers, a forum for teacher concerns), but differ in many other respects (e.g., numbers, chairperson, selection of members).

Next, project consultants met with the principal and the consulting teacher of each building. These meetings were intended to familiarize principals with the team concept, to answer questions about teams and to gather concerns and issues in the building as perceived by the principal. It provided us with more information about each school and its principal before meeting with the principals as a group.

At the risk of sounding simplistic: for an innovation to succeed in a school, it must have the support of the principal. The major goal of our two meetings with the principals was to begin generating that support. By meeting individually, recording their concerns and then sharing the list with the group we were able to promote a sharing of ideas that may not have been possible at group meetings at which we would ask for their concerns. During the meeting the project director and project consultants discussed the goals of the project and how a team would help meet these goals. The ways in which a team could strengthen a school and help the principal were highlighted. A team can be an asset to a principal by providing a vehicle of communication with the faculty, facilitating group planning in the school, and giving teachers a voice in the problem solving process of the school ("Look what *we* have done" instead of "See what *they* have done to us"). We stressed that a team was not a mandate and that any development would be slow and with our assistance. Concerns expressed by the principals included:

1. No time.
2. Can a team solve problems better than I can?
3. What will make teachers willing to make this commitment?
4. Is this different from a special education committee?

We ended the meeting by asking that any principal still interested in a team contact the project

consultant assigned to his building.

Every principal has responded, some quickly, some after a rather lengthy interval. After the contact, a project consultant, the principal, and consulting teacher met to begin the process of forming a team. This was where the individualization of a team to fit unique characteristics of the school became important. A proposed team definition was shared and adjusted. Active committees, their functions, members and meeting times were analyzed in an attempt to avoid duplication. Support personnel in the school or assigned to the school were listed. The roles of the principal, consulting teacher, and project consultant were discussed. Specific issues and possible goals for the team were noted. Team selection was considered. Some teams were formed of volunteers, after a presentation to the entire staff. Others were selected after the principal and consulting teacher discussed appropriate faculty members for a team. These people were given a choice of accepting or declining. We felt that it was important to have a broad representation of faculty members on the team. We recommended that one member of the special education staff in the school be represented and that members should vary in grade level, subject area and personality (within reason) to insure that all levels have a voice and to promote a constructive exchange of ideas.

After selection, the teams met with the principal, consulting teacher, and project staff for orientation regarding their functions. An all day inservice session for the team was planned. The inservice was both a training session and a planning session. Team members were released from their school responsibilities. They began to surface issues of concern and to develop a plan of action for meeting times, gaining acceptance, and communicating with the faculty. The training for each team varied somewhat. Some teams were trained in decision making methods and problem solving models. These activities were based on the work of David and Frank Johnson (See *Joining Together: Group Theory and Skills*).

Other training activities consisted of the teams brainstorming goals and prioritizing these goals. Also, fears and misgivings about the team building venture were elicited, as were strengths that individuals brought to the effort. All these efforts focused on effective group processes and in most cases illustrated these processes. Some teams played a simulation game as part of the training activities. The Diffusion Game, developed by Michael Molenda, illustrates political, professional and personal influences at work in a school which can help and/or hinder the adoption of an innovation by the staff. Participants felt that the game provided them with insights they could use in future planning.

Our development was a slow process, with a great deal of planning preceding implementation. Team members were given the opportunity to drop out at any time during the planning stage. Following the initial stages of planning, the teams decided the appropriate time to "go public." A short presentation about goals and functions of the team and an invitation for ideas from the staff were made. The team's planning meetings were not secretive or isolated. Further, the point must often be made to the faculty that team members are a support for their colleagues. The intent is to work together to get things done, and that will not happen without the faculty's input.

We stressed to all the teams that they should begin having regularly scheduled meetings once they felt comfortable with all the logistical planning. Initially, team members generated agenda items. Expecting faculty members to approach the team with agenda items at the beginning may be idealistic and self-defeating. It is important for the team to maintain its channels of communication with the faculty.

Further, some action(s) should result from the team meetings. If the faculty sees the team accomplishing some things of importance, their acceptance of the team will begin to build. One team has discussed the possibility of a resource room for the school. They have made a presentation to the faculty; the proposition was unanimously accepted and a special education coordinator will meet with the team on the matter. Another team has arranged for the Director of Special Education and the Director of Elementary Education to meet with the faculty to discuss solutions

for mainstreaming concerns. A middle school team is dealing with the grading policy of the school. One school's team, during its early meetings, elected to work on improving the utilization of the school library. Team members feel that they have instituted some improvements in the situation and have received positive feedback from faculty members not on the team. It is through activities like these that the team becomes conspicuous and associated with making positive changes in the school, changes which help teachers.

Most schools have noted that non-members are attending team meetings and are participating. With the meetings being held before or after school, it may be assumed that teachers are interested in the team, since they are using their *own* time to participate.

From their close work with their teams, the consulting teachers have suggested some helpful hints or keys to success in the formation of building teams.

1. Patience is vital.
2. Do not try to do everything in a month.
3. Team building is a slow process.
4. The team must carefully plan its early successes and evolve from them.
5. Team members must know and/or learn the needs of the teachers in the building.
6. Breakfast meetings can be reinforcers for team members.
7. Principal support is vital.
8. Inservice training for team members is helpful.
9. Sharing successes and failures with other teams strengthens teams.
10. Teams should establish a regular meeting time (e.g., every other Tuesday at 7:30 a.m.).
11. Team members divide the responsibility for building the support of and communicating with faculty members.
12. The composition of the team should represent a cross section of the school.

One of our principals claims that a team's endeavors are limited only by the members' imagination and desire. All of us involved in this venture feel that communication between staff members and their principal is now at a higher and more efficient level. Teachers are working together with their principals to problem solve both general and specific problems in their classroom and/or their school. All involved feel that the team venture can be a powerful, positive force in breaking down the isolation and loneliness of the educators (teachers and principals alike) in our schools.

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APPENDIX D

PARENTS ON SCHOOL BASED STAFF SUPPORT TEAMS

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PARENTS ON SCHOOL BASED STAFF SUPPORT TEAMS

by
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Sally Stephenson

Although parents have not usually been included in the formation of staff support teams, a number of teams have found their involvement to be helpful. Since the team is considered a support system for the building staff, a parent might be considered an "outsider".

There are, however, a variety of issues that could come before a staff support team that would benefit from parent involvement. For example, the issue of instituting a new grading system could profit from extended parental participation on the team during each stage of the process: soliciting reactions to the concept, developing the new plan itself, and choosing a means of conveying the idea to the faculty and school community. If a team choses to meet an expressed staff need by facilitating the development of a program which involved parents, such as volunteer program with parents as listeners, remedial tutors, or career models, extensive parent member involvement on the team would be useful at each stage of planning and implementation.

The teams described in this monograph primarily function at the discretion of their membership for their own development. The members may be grappling with their own group dynamics and have little success in accurately communicating their own feelings of needs to their own professional colleagues. Sharing their anxiety and frustration with a patron would be risky.

The question of timing is one which will vary for each team and will be effectively handled when the team members have gained experience in dealing with difficult issues with one another first. A successful history of being a team passing through the normal stages of group development is an important prerequisite before it can be inclusive of additional perspectives that patrons represent.

When a decision has been made to include a parent on a team, a number of questions must be considered:

- Who makes the decision whether or not a parent is included?
- What criteria should be used for the selection of a parent?
- Should the parent be a regular member of the team or invited to specific meetings?

The answers to these and other related questions will depend upon the focus or mission of each team within its unique content and the manner in which it chooses its own membership and determines its methods of operation.

Who determines whether a parent is included is critical. All members of the team including the principal or administrative representative should reach consensus about parent participation. The criteria for selection of a parent could include the following:

1. Has the parent been successfully involved in school activities prior to being considered for inclusion on the team? e.g., in the P.T.A.?
2. Has this person worked in a classroom in a voluntary capacity?
3. Has he or she had exposure to the entire school?
4. Has he or she demonstrated interest in a variety of aspects of school life rather than a single dimension?
5. Has he or she the time and interest to further the support of school staff?
6. Does he or she have positive relationships with members of the community? Is this person someone who can bring diverse groups together or is this a person who represents a single faction in the community?
7. Is the person willing to be involved in any training necessary for team members?

Should a team have a certain number of parents as members? The answer to this question will depend upon the kinds of issues being discussed. One or multiple parent perspectives may be

needed by a particular team. Again, it is critical to look at each school situation to determine how many parents will be appropriate and whether their membership should be consistent or on an issue-specific basis.

There are several ways to make a parent a more effective team member. One of the most important is to provide the parent with the necessary training. The parent also needs to be informed of team activities by, for example, receiving notices of meeting times, and agenda and a copy of the minutes and/or other information when appropriate. It is helpful if there is one contact person for the parent on the team. In addition, including the parent in inservice training on topics related to team discussions helps the parent be more informed in specific content areas and, therefore, better able to discuss issues as they arise.

The end result of having a parent as a team member can be a cooperative effort of school based problem solving.

APPENDIX E

INSERVICE TRAINING FOR EDUCATORS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:

Evaluation Considerations

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INSERVICE TRAINING FOR EDUCATORS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:
Evaluation Considerations

by
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The purpose of this paper is to describe a model of inservice training which is designed to meet the needs of school personnel who are implementing Public Law 94–142. The major focus is on the project's evaluation plan, the results of the data analysis and the implications of these data for program modification and replication.

Program Description

The Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study, in collaboration with the Education Collaborative for Greater Boston (EdCo), has been awarded a grant from the United States Bureau of Education for the Handicapped to develop a model for and provide inservice training to educators, administrators and ancillary professional personnel for the purpose of improving the education of children with special needs who are mainstreamed in regular classes. This model also incorporates a university-based, inservice program to train Generic Consulting Teachers who will consult with and augment the skills of teachers who are mainstreaming special needs children into regular classes. Upon successful completion of the graduate program, each trainee will receive Massachusetts State Department certification as a Generic Consulting Teacher and an M.Ed. degree.

There are three, two-year cycles of training. The first cycle of training began in 1978 with four regular class teachers from each of two school systems. The second cycle (1979–81) serves eight trainees from one of the systems from the first cycle and from three other school systems. The third cycle (1980–82) will train eight more teachers.

Perhaps the most innovative aspect of this training project is the development within each school building, of a Staff Support Team (SST) consisting of two regular class teachers and at least one of each of the following: building administrator, special class teacher, and ancillary professional such as the school psychologist, guidance counselor, speech/language therapist, etc. The candidates for the Generic Consulting Teacher certificate/M.Ed. degree are members of the SST. All members receive year-long training to function as a Staff Support Team via supervised consultation and on-site skills and methods training sessions as may be requested.

The SST in each school building carries out two kinds of on-going consultation. It provides a weekly meeting forum at which teachers can present their concerns and receive immediate as well as follow-up assistance in serving the children in their classrooms. In addition, the SST and, in particular, the Generic/M.Ed. trainee provides inservice workshops for teachers on skills useful in the education of special needs children.

Generic Consulting Teacher/M.Ed. candidates receive University and on-site training in theoretical and applied coursework, including twelve credits of human growth and development courses and twenty credits in applied areas. M.Ed. candidates take a course each semester beginning in the fall of the first year of the training cycle and continuing through spring of the second year of the training cycle. Two courses are taken during the summer.

Evaluation Plan

The overall process of the project's evaluation efforts follows the D.E.M. model,[1] thereby comparing intended goals or objectives with the actual results of the training efforts. There are four major objectives of the Tufts/EdCo training efforts:

1. Yavorsky, D.K., *Discrepancy Evaluation: A Practitioner's Guide*, University of Virginia Evaluation Research Center, 1976.

1. To create an indigenous, school-based group (the Staff Support Team comprised of at least two regular educators, a special educator, an administrator, and an ancillary professional) and to train this group to provide consultation, assistance and peer training to regular class teachers who are responding to Massachusetts State Law Chapter 766 and the Public Law 94–142.
2. To train one member of the Staff Support Team to become a Generic Consulting Teacher who will provide consultation and inservice training to regular class teachers working with special needs children.
3. To help teachers in regular classes mainstream or integrate special needs children, more specifically, to increase these teachers' skills in formal and informal assessment, design and implementation of individualized educational plans and classroom and behavior management strategies.
4. To develop an inservice training model which can be (a) replicated in other school buildings within the school systems initially involved in the training network and in other school systems and (b) to state departments of education and institutions of higher education who are providing inservice special education training to regular educators.

For each objective, evaluation questions have been posed. These questions address both the process and content of the training efforts as well as the outcomes or results. For each question, sources of information such as the trainers, trainees, those receiving the services of the trainees have been specified, and evaluation procedures have been developed to tap each source. The data collected thereby determines the extent to which each objective is being met.

Two evaluation questions addressed the first objective: Does the non-degree Staff Support Team Training Program produce the change intended, i.e. does it create a multi-disciplinary group which provides assistance and consultation to regular class teachers working with special children? The two evaluation questions posed for this objective were: (1) Does the program enable SST members to achieve competence in consulting skills and specific content areas? and (2) Does the SST continue to function after the initial one year training period? Only one portion of question (1), however, can be appropriately answered at this time in the training program. Two instruments provided data to answer this question. One was the "SST Consulting Skills Checklist," an instrument which enabled the staff consultants to provide feedback, informally, to SST members regarding their consulting skills with regular class teachers during SST meetings. The skills included in this checklist were:

1. Participates effectively in group decision making and problem solving.
2. Shows ability to listen to other adults.
3. Skillfully gives and receives feedback.
4. Demonstrates ability to learn from other adults.
5. Shows tolerance and appreciation of diverse styles, attitudes and background of personnel in school setting.
6. Demonstrates overall helpful and effective consulting skills.

By the end of Year One of the first training cycle, all SST members had been evaluated as achieving some degree of competence which ranged from *initial* to *mastery* in each of these skills.

The second instrument provided evaluation, by colleagues, of SST members' consultation skills. The opinions of those regular class teachers who had brought case studies to a SST were sampled by the use of the "Evaluation of Consultation Skills by Colleagues" form. Fifteen teachers were asked to rate SST members on five consulting skills: ability to listen carefully, ability to provide useful information, helpfulness in identifying central issues(s) of concern, helpfulness in developing solutions to problems posed, and ability to respond supportively. A rating of 1 represented "yes"; 3, "somewhat"; and 5 indicated the absence of the particular skill. The teachers' evaluations of SST members' consultation skills were very positive. Scores ranged from 1 to 2.17. A summary of the data collected from the two instruments described above would suggest

that SST's which are being developed in the project are indeed providing useful consultation services to regular class teachers.

The second objective of the project was to produce competent consulting teachers. Three evaluation questions addressed this objective. Two were long range, follow-up questions and can only be answered after program graduates have successfully obtained and held employment in this new teacher's role: (1) What jobs do Generic/M.Ed. graduates enter upon completion of our training program? (2) Does the program (training) have a lasting effect, i.e. are graduates competent "on the job," and do graduates feel competent in their roles?

The third evaluation question (Does the content and process of the program enable the trainee to have achieved competencies upon completion of training modules?) could be answered more immediately. There were three sources of evaluation data to answer this questions: the trainers (university faculty and project staff), those who were being trained and those who received services from the trainees.

Course instructors evaluated the trainees' competencies based on criteria which had been set forth in the Competency Document.[2] Since the program is a competency based one, as mandated by Massachusetts Department of Education, the knowledge and skills of the graduates, as well as a description of the processes by which these competencies are met and evaluated, have been delineated. To date each generic consulting teacher (GCT) trainee has passed every competency evaluation procedure.

From the perspective of those being trained, the data would suggest that there are positive feelings about the areas in which training is being received. On the "Evaluation of Program by Trainees" questionnaire, the students indicated that they were learning information that would help them be competent GCT's. They described the knowledge and techniques they were learning as worthwhile; they were able to apply the skills gained immediately; and they used the information learned in working with both colleagues and students.

The consulting skills of the GCT trainees, as members of the Peer Support Group, were evaluated by colleagues by use of the SST Consulting Skills Checklist. The results of this data collection were summarized on the previous page.

In summary, the initial data collected on the knowledge and skill gained by trainees upon completion of learning modules would indicate that the GCT trainees are becoming competent in those areas addressed in the training program to date. More extensive data on trainee competence as a generic consulting teacher will be gathered during the Year Two internship.

The third objective of the project was to train and develop an SST (including a generic consulting teacher) which would produce a change in the skills and attitudes of regular class teachers working with special needs children. The evaluation question which addressed this objective asked, "Are regular class teachers more competent in working with special needs children after receiving SST and/or GCT services?" This question was broken down into two sub-questions: "Does the regular class teacher feel more competent?" "Does the targeted child's behavior improve?" In each school participating, a sample of teachers was asked to complete the SST Activities: Teacher Follow-up Survey. Comments from the teachers who returned the questionnaire indicate that they felt more competent or believed that their skills in working with children has been enhanced as a result of discussion(s) with the SST in their building.

During the conceptualization stages of the project, the staff had intended to utilize an additional source of information that would document both increased competence in teachers and improvement in the learning and/or social behavior of children. The evidence of this change would be a significant decrease in the number of referrals for team evaluations and/or the progressive movement of targeted children to increasingly less restrictive educational environments. In other

2. Copies of the Competency Document may be obtained from the authors.

words, the forum provided by the SST would increase the skill of regular class teachers and their feelings of competence about working with special needs children, and, as a result, these teachers would feel less need to rely on specialists either for evaluative information or educational support services. Informal comments by SST members would indicate that, in fact, this has occurred. To formally demonstrate the impact of the SST meetings, the project staff planned to collect data from 1975–1979 (and throughout the training project) to demonstrate that the number of team evaluations had significantly decreased and/or the prototypes assigned to children had been reduced to less restrictive environments. Efforts to collect this data, however, have been futile. Each school building records data in a different manner, and the data from one school cannot be compared to that from another school.

At this point in the training cycle, the only data that is available to report child progress as a result of SST intervention is of an informal nature and consists of the verbal reports of teachers to SST members. During 1979–80, however, a more structured form of child progress data will be collected by the consulting teacher trainees during their internship. While consulting with regular class teachers during either SST meetings or follow-up activities, the consulting teacher and the regular class teacher will develop and keep a child progress log. A content analysis of these logs at the end of Year Two should provide more specific data on whether or not SST activities produce a change in the skills and attitudes of regular class teachers and result in the progress of the children with whom they work.

The fourth objective was to develop a training model which could be replicated in other school buildings within the systems with which we began our program and in other school systems. Two evaluation questions relate to this objective. "To what extent can this model be replicated?" and "Has information about the model been disseminated?" The question of replicability of the project has been divided into two parts, the first addresses the following questions: (1) Has the model of training of service providers, i.e. Generic Consulting Teachers, together with building-based Staff Support Teams, once adopted by a school system, been expanded into additional schools within a system during successive years? (2) Has this model been adopted by other school systems? The other aspect of replicability is addressed by the question: To what extent has the combined university and field based training model been adopted by other teacher training institutions?

Both schools systems involved in the first cycle of training were committed to expand the program into more school buildings during the second cycle; however, only one qualified degree candidate emerged from one of those systems. Three new systems adopted the model and joined the project for the second cycle of training. For the third cycle, at least one of the systems currently involved in the project anticipates expanding into more sites, and at least one more school system will be added to the project. Two factors appear to play a major role in influencing the decision on the part of a school system to expand the program: (1) the percentage of the total number of school buildings currently involved in the project and the resulting availability of new sites for consideration, and (2) the availability of funds to support the newly generated role of Generic Consulting Teacher during the internship in the second year of the training cycle.

The major thrust of the evaluation data collection is designed to document the impact of the training model on teachers, other school personnel, and children. Attempts are being made to identify and delineate those parts of the training model which are sufficiently general, yet are of demonstrated validity so that they might be used by other teacher training institutions. By the end of the third year of the project, descriptions of the implementation of this training model, will have been identified for dissemination to other teacher training programs and school systems.

Although the Tufts training project has only been in operation for one and one half years, portions of its concept have already been adopted by other teacher training institutions. For example, the way in which the building-based support teams are developed and the role of consulting teacher on the team has been used as a model for modifying the training program at another university.

The model of training has been disseminated both formally and informally. Formal presentations have been made throughout the country to college and university faculty who are providing inservice training to regular and special educators, to state department personnel, and to administrators, educators, psychologists and other professionals within school systems. Dissemination has been carried out informally by means of statewide committee work, discussions with other teacher educators and at conferences of project directors of other inservice training programs.

As a result of our experiences in implementing the training program, an analysis of the data from the first year of the project described above, and the information gathered from the mid-year evaluation questionnaires of the second year of the project, the overall objectives of the project are being met. Moreover, this information combined with the experiences of the project staff in implementing the training program would indicate that although the general concept of the project is viable, modifications have been necessary to meet the needs of the staff as well as the demands of the socio-political structure in different school systems and even in individual school buildings within a given system. The following modifications have been made. One additional regular class teacher has been added to the building-based team to adjust the balance between specialists and regular educators. Uniformity in the timetable for the development of SSTs, in the manner in which the Staff Support Teams offer services to teachers and in the on-the-spot and long-term training needs of SST members is no longer expected nor would it be desirable. Each SST is regarded as an autonomously functioning unit and operates and receives consultation and training (both formally and informally) according to its own particular needs and those of the staff it serves. The purpose of the SST has been expanded from the original concept of case presentations to include discussions of pertinent topics by one or more teachers. Since teachers appear to need a forum to discuss more general issues as well as particular children, this need can and should be met by the Staff Support Team.

In addition to modifications in the original concept of the project, a modification in project management has also occurred. In the past the sequence of contacts made to administrators within a school system for recruitment purposes was not systematic whereas now it has been made explicit because of knowledge of the socio-political structures within school systems.

This paper has presented a description of a model of inservice training which is designed to meet the needs of school personnel who are carrying out the mandate of Public Law 94–142. The project's evaluation plan, the results of the data analysis and the implications of these data for program modification and replication have been delineated. The experience of implementing the project and the data gathered throughout the last year and a half, provide ample evidence that the Tufts University–Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study training concept is a flexible model which with modifications and variations as required by the unique characteristics of each school setting, can be replicated by teacher training personnel.

AFTERWORD

The National Inservice Network (NIN) is a temporary linkage agency designed to exchange information about inservice programs for regular educators who are becoming more involved in the education of exceptional children. NIN is funded by the Division of Personnel Preparation, Office of Special Education/Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education.

The NIN National Advisory Board (NAB) organized eight task forces from 1979 through the summer of 1981. One of these task forces focused particularly on the use of school building-based staff support teams to support locally based inservice education programs. The Staff Support Team Task Force was composed of project directors from state departments, universities and school districts, and representatives from the area of administration, teaching, and parent advocacy.

The major effort of the task was the creation of a document on building-based teams. The members met for three days, and had extensive follow-up conversations in the preparation of this document. The result is an outline, a guide, to assist the reader who is considering or is in the midst of establishing a building-based staff support team. Besides the specific outline, the report also provides a description of model programs and in the appendices includes three perspectives on programs and on the critical variables which need to be considered when establishing and maintaining such a team.

May 19, 1981, the National Advisory Board reviewed the final report of this task force, and authorized dissemination to policy makers, administrators, inservice developers and others interested in professional development. The NAB felt that this task force report should focus on staff support not direct support to handicapped students. The members stressed there is sufficient evidence to indicate that staff support teams both enhance a sense of professional efficacy and increase staff exchanges to utilize local resources at the building level.

The NAB specifically recommended that:

- this product should be jointly advertised and disseminated by the Council for Exceptional Children and the National Principals Association since administrative support is critical both for the initiation and ongoing maintenance of building based staff support teams;
- other leadership persons in state and national organizations of teachers and administrators should be seen as potential users and recipients of this document.

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Finally, on behalf of the National Advisory Board, I would like to thank Shari Stokes, the task force chairperson, who synthesized the multiple perspectives of the Board and task force to create this report. We give the document our hearty endorsement, and hope to see it in the hands of administrators and teachers throughout the United States who, we hope, will work cooperatively to support the most valuable resource in the schools – teachers.

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